

**THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING BORN A YELLOW-BONE: A
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
STUDENTS**

by

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Declaration

I, Tsitsi Chirove, declare that:


- a) The research reported in this dissertation, except where stated otherwise, is my original work;
- b) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university;
- c) This dissertation does not entail other people's work unless specifically attributed as such, in which case their words have been rephrased and referenced. However, where their exact words have been used, their writings have been placed in quotation marks or indented and referenced.



Signed

Date: 12 August 2019

I, Professor Augustine Nwoye, confirm that the work reported in this dissertation was carried out by Tsitsi Chirove under my supervision.



Signed

Date 12 August, 2019_____

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the lived experiences of participating students who are born with light skin. The study specifically explored the participants' understanding of the advantages and disadvantages and challenges associated with being light-skinned.

A qualitative design method was used to implement the study. A purposively selected sample of twelve participants from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus took part in the study regardless of their level of study, of which six were females, and six were males, and they were all Black South Africans. Data was collected using an in-depth interview method. To analyse the results, an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis was used. The end goal was to reveal the essence of participants' experiences brought about by their being born light-skinned, encompassing their accounts as to how they feel as they live with light skin in a society with other people with different skin tones.

The results of the study showed that people who are born light-skinned are faced with some specifiable positive and negative experiences arising from the condition of their 'yellow-bone' endowment. Some of the positive experiences include: having a positive feeling because of their light skin tone; the feeling of being easily sought out for courtship; the fact that they do not struggle to get a mating partner; and the phenomenon of feeling good for being endowed with a skin colour that is preferred in society. Some of their negative experiences include the crisis of suffering from exclusion and name-calling from some members of the society; the experience of being underestimated, and the negative experience of being treated like people with loose morals. Implications of these findings were examined, and some recommendations were made to encourage further studies along the lines of the present study.

Table of Contents

Title.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	2
1.3 Purpose of the study	2
1.4 Objectives of the study	2
1.5 Research questions	3
1.6 Significance of the study	3
1.7 Assumptions of the study	3
1.8 Scope and delimitations of the study	3
1.9 Operational definitions	4
1.10 Summary and overview of the study.....	4
CHAPTER TWO.....	6
LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 History and impact of colonialism in Africa	6
2.3 History and impact of colonialism in South Africa	7
2.4 History / origins of skin bleaching	8
2.5 Skin bleaching and the media	9
2.6 Perceived advantages of being light-skinned.....	11
2.7 Summary and synthesis of the review	12
2.8 Conceptual framework.....	13
2.9 Summary.....	15
CHAPTER THREE.....	16
METHODOLOGY.....	16
3.1 Introduction.....	16
3.2 Research paradigm.....	16
3.3 Design of the study.....	16
3.4 Location of the study.....	17
3.4.1 Study population	17

3.4.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria	17
3.5 Sampling technique and sample size.....	17
3.5.1 Recruitment and data collection strategy	18
3.6 Research rigor/ Quality criteria.....	19
3.6.1 Credibility	19
3.6.2 Dependability.....	20
3.6.3 Transferability.....	20
3.7 Data analysis.....	21
3.8 Ethical considerations	21
CHAPTER FOUR	24
RESULTS OF THE STUDY.....	24
4.1 Introduction.....	24
4.2 Descriptive analysis of distribution of respondents	24
4.3 Presentation of results research question	25
4.3.1 Research question one:.....	25
4.3.2 Research question two:	32
4.3.3 Research question three:	37
4.4 Summary of findings	42
CHAPTER FIVE	44
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	44
5.1 Introduction.....	44
5.2 Discussion of results, research question by research question.....	44
5.2.1 Research question one:.....	44
5.2.2 Research question two:	49
5.2.3 Research question three:	52
5.3 Summary of the study.....	55
5.4 Conclusions	56
5.5 Implications and Recommendations	56
5.6 Limitations of the study	57
5.7 Recommendations for further research	57
REFERENCES	59
APPENDICES	65
Appendix 1: Information Sheet.....	65
Appendix 2: Consent Form for Interviews	67
Appendix 3: Audio Consent.....	68
Appendix 4: Interview Schedule	69

Appendix 5: Ethical Clearance Approval Letter	70
Appendix 6: Gate Keeper Approval Letter	71

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Skin bleaching is a practice whereby dark-skinned people apply skin lightening chemicals on their bodies in an endeavour to become fair or have light complexions (Kpanake, Muñoz Sastre & Mullet, 2010). This phenomenon is widespread globally and, it affects both male and female, young and old. According to Blay (2011), the practice of skin bleaching dates back to the Elizabethan era of powder and paint. During the Elizabethan era, white make-up was applied to the face to acquire a pale look, which was so desirable that women were even bled to achieve the desired look (Blay, 2011). In addition, skin bleaching can be traced back to colonialism. This assumption is supported by the finding from a study conducted in Tanzania which explored the motivation behind skin bleaching, which discovered that skin bleachinga to self-objection, colonialism and, Westernisation (Lewis, Robkin, Gaska & Njoki, 2011).

It has become clear from several studies that have been conducted to date across the globe that many people prefer to be fair-skinned or yellow bone rather than being dark-skinned (Glen, 2008; de Souza, 2008; (Bhagwandas, 2011; de Souza, 2008; Dooley, 2001; Glen, 2008; Lewis, Robkin, Gaska & Njoki, 2011). Governments in some countries, for example, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, have restricted the importation and sale of cosmetics that contain mercury and hydroquinone (Dooley, 2001). Studies to investigate the consequences of skin bleaching have also been conducted across the globe, in an effort to highlight the effects that skin bleaching has on the health of people who engage in it (Mahe, Ly, Aymard & Dangou, 2003; Pitché, Kombaté & Tchangai-Walla, 2005; Petit, Cohen-Ludmann, Clevenbergh, Bergmann & Dubertret, 2006; de Souza, 2008; Hunter, 2011). Some complications caused by skin bleaching chemicals include facial acne, facial hypertrichosis and stretch marks (Del Guidice & Yves, 2002), kidney failure, glaucoma, menstrual irregularities and osteoporosis (Olumide et al., 2008) and many other complications. Regardless of these revelations, people still engage in skin-bleaching practices.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Studies have shown that skin bleaching is a continuous phenomenon (de Souza, 2008) and despite the knowledge of the consequences, people still utilise skin lightening creams. These trends show that people aspire to be fair or light-skinned and much attention has been devoted to the motivations and consequences of skin bleaching (Keakile, 2016; de Souza, 2008; Lewis et al., 2011). However, less or no attention has been given to the experiences of those people who have been privileged to be born with fair complexions, and these are normally referred to as the 'yellow bones'. Therefore, this study sought to examine the experience of the yellow born to ascertain their feelings, challenges, advantages, and disadvantages associated with being a yellow-bone. The study also sought to understand what it means to be born with light skin among University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) students. Is there a story to tell in a context where people are struggling and yearning to become light-skinned?

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences, stories and understanding of those people who have been privileged to be born with light skins, normally referred to as 'yellow bones', among UKZN students. The study also sought to ascertain what advantages and/or disadvantages and/or challenges, if any, are associated with being a 'yellow bone' in a context where many people are yearning to be like them. It was expected that data sourced from this exploration would help to explain the continuous indulgence in skin-bleaching practices.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To explore the lived experiences of UKZN students who are born with light skins.
2. To examine the understanding of students born with light skin regarding the advantages of being born with lighter skin.
3. To ascertain the disadvantages and challenges that are associated with being light-skinned.

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the lived experiences of UKZN students who are light skinned? In particular, how it feels to be born a light-skinned child?
2. What are the possible advantages of being born a light-skinned child as perceived by those born with such skin?
3. What are the possible disadvantages and challenges associated with being born with light skin?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is deemed significant because it sought to explore the experiences of UKZN students who were born with fair or light skins. It was expected that the study would help to understand the advantages, egos, disadvantages, and challenges of having light skin. It was also expected that the study would help to ascertain if those people who engage in skin-bleaching practices are justified in doing so or not. This is because there has been a negative connotation towards people who bleach their skin and they get judged for doing so. Many studies (Keakile, 2016; de Souza, 2008; Lewis et al., 2011) have been done on the consequences, motivation, knowledge and the creation of awareness on the effects of skin-bleaching but very few studies, if any, have been done to focus on those who have been born with fair complexions. Therefore, this study sought to close that gap.

1.7 Assumptions of the study

This study is grounded on the following assumptions:

1. Those who are born with light skin have experiences that are different from those who were born with darker skin.
2. There are advantages to being born with lighter skin, and because of these advantages, darker people aspire to be light-skinned; thus, they engage in skin bleaching practices.
3. There are also disadvantages to being light-skinned.

1.8 Scope and delimitations of the study

The study was conducted at the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus, and the participants of the study were students, both male and female, regardless of their level of study. As long they were registered students of UKZN they were eligible to participate. The participants of this study were all Black South Africans. Therefore, generalisation to other populations is not possible.

In addition, the study explored the experiences of those who were born with lighter skin among the university students who are 18 years and above, therefore, any student who did not fall into that category was not eligible to participate in the study and considered outside the scope of the study.

1.9 Operational definitions

Apartheid: Racial classification system which denied people, particularly Black people, and access to opportunities based on the colour of their skin (Brown, 2000).

light-skinned: “Any person of mixed blood; and includes children as well as descendants from Black-White, Black-Asian, White-Asian, and Black-Coloured unions” (Brown, 2000, p. 198).

Colonialism: “Acquisition of political dominion over another country or group of people with the primary goal of economic advancement” (Nkrumah, 1962 as cited in Utsey, Abrams, Opare-Henaku, Bolden & Williams, 2014, p. 3).

Colorism: “Preference for and privileging of lighter skin and discriminating against those with darker skin” (Glenn, 2008, p. 281).

Skin bleaching/whitening: Used interchangeably in this study, and “involves the application of various cosmetic products (e. g. creams, soap, and lotions) that contain potentially dangerous chemical agents” (Kpanake, Sastre & Mullet, 2010, pp. 350–351).

Yellow bone: slang for a light-skinned person, a term which originated from the United States especially from Beyoncé, an American singer, who referred to herself as a *yellow bone* in her song “Transformation” (Dayile, 2018).

1.10 Summary and overview of the study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1, the introductory chapter, provides a synopsis of the study, which is the background and rationale of this study. Chapter 2 is the literature review, which outlines the major findings on the topic at hand, as well as an overview of the theoretical explanations regarding this topic. Chapter 3 highlights the methods that the researcher employed to conduct the study. This includes an outline of the research design, sampling techniques, methods of data collection, data analysis, as well as crucial ethical considerations that were taken into account throughout the research process. The findings of this study are presented and provided in Chapter 4. Lastly, Chapter 5 presents an in-depth

discussion of the findings of the study, including the implications and recommendations arising from them.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section of the study reviewed the literature on the global phenomenon of skin bleaching. The reason why the researcher used the literature on skin bleaching is because of the paucity of literature on the topic under study. More so, the literature on skin bleaching will give one the understanding of those who are born with light skin because those who skin bleach endeavor to have that skin tone too. It also outlined the history or origins of skin bleaching. In addition, foreign and local empirical studies will be reviewed, and a summary and synthesis of the review will be provided. Furthermore, the literature review section will discuss the conceptual framework that will give a guide to the study. Lastly, this section will provide a summary of the whole section.

2.2 History and impact of colonialism in Africa

The colonisation of Africa by Europeans had a huge negative effect on the African continent (Blay, 2011). Colonialism affected Africa's culture, identity, and ideologies by assimilation (Charles, 2003). Africans were acculturated in almost every area of their being, and colonial rulers expected Africans to align their culture and traditions with European standards (Blay, 2011). They viewed Africans as inferior people who needed to be emancipated from their misery and as a result their cultural characteristics, like language and religion, were changed (Hunter, 2007).

Africans were made to believe in White supremacy and that nothing was better. The mentality of Whites was characterised by the unjust treatment and subservience of the African continent by the European powers (Blay, 2011). The Whites depicted whiteness as the epitome of human beings, and anything not white was not good enough. Within the global White supremacy, skin colour communicates one's position to and within the dominant power structure (Hunter, 2002). Given this reality, many people, namely those subjected to White domination, colonisation, and enslavement, have historically internalised projected notions that the basis of their inferior condition was their skin (Hunter, 2011). More so, living under White domination has severely traumatised the descendants of African soil of their ability to orient themselves towards self-love and embracing their cultures and ideologies (Blay, 2011). This

could account for the reason why some African people try to imitate White people, and engaging in skin bleaching practices is but one method.

In addition, Fanon (2008) asserted that the White elite ruling of colonies maintained White superiority and domination by enlisting the assistance of the colonial elite, often a small light-skinned class of colonised people. They made people believe that if you have fairer or lighter skin compared to Black folks, you are better than them. This is of interest in this particular study to ascertain if those who are born with light skin are entitled to things that are beyond the reach of those that are dark-skinned.

2.3 History and impact of colonialism in South Africa

South Africa was under a repressive government that of colonialism and apartheid, for a very long time, and people were affected both physically and emotionally. These psychological impacts are still very evident even in this day and age. Some of these effects include self-hatred, low self-esteem, and many others (Julien, 2014). These effects made people conscious of their appearance, and as a result, people have engaged in physical alterations in an endeavour to feel better and fit in, to be acceptable and afforded privileges. One such physical alteration is skin bleaching or skin lightening (Abrahams, 2000; Charles, 2003). It will be interesting to hear the experiences of those who were born light-skinned to verify if they agree with the above assertion, that is if being light-skinned affords them certain advantages compared to their dark-skinned counterparts.

In addition, Charles (2003) argued that to understand why some South Africans prefer Eurocentric ideals of beauty, such as having a lighter skin tone, one needs to investigate the residuals left after apartheid. During colonisation one of the methods used to control the slaves was to establish White supremacy, which meant the oppressors had to make sure that Black South Africans knew that their colonisers were superior in every way (Dorman, 2011). This status quo was maintained throughout, and the coloniser made sure that Black Africans continue to be subservient to them. In the eyes of the oppressors, there was nothing good about a Black person; they were always portrayed as backward, unattractive and dirty while the Whites were the epitome of beauty, virtue and were loveable (Dorman, 2011). To further reinforce their domination, Whites associated being Black with filth, disease, pollution, and immorality (Blay, 2011). During apartheid, new laws were put in place, people were separated by race, and their political involvement was thwarted resulting in them not voting or exercising their civil rights (Clark & Worger, 2016). As a result, Black South Africans lost their self-

esteem and were made to believe that only people with light skin were entitled to success and happiness and they also pinned their struggles on being dark-skinned (Hunter, 2007). The current study seeks to engage with those people who were born with light skin to find out if they enjoy benefits other than those their dark-skinned counterparts enjoy.

2.4 History/origins of skin bleaching

The phenomenon of skin bleaching is a global phenomenon that has an impact on both young and old, males, and females. The concept of skin bleaching can be traced to the Elizabethan era of powder and paint (Blay, 2011; Julien, 2014). A preliminary review of the studies done on skin bleaching has traced its history from the Elizabethan era of powder and paint (Blay, 2011; Julien, 2014). According to these earlier studies, although skin bleaching might be traced back to the Elizabethan era, the impact of colonialism on the mind of the colonised in terms of this practice, cannot be ruled out (Blay, 2011; de Souza, 2008; Glenn, 2008; Thomas, 2008). This is because when the Europeans came to Africa, they depicted white as superior to black (Blay, 2011). They equally depicted God as white and Satan as black and whiteness as godliness (Dyer, 1997). At that time, white was conceptualised as the colour of power and ability to act (Blay, 2011).

According to Fanon (2008), whiteness was a symbol of purity, justice, truth, and virginity. Hence, one had to acquire white skin to be valued; therefore, people engaged in skin bleaching practices. Europeans did not only depict whiteness as a colour that asserts power and prestige, but they also brought in some commodities they perceived were going to civilise the Black Africans (Burke, 1996). One such commodity was soap, and it was significant in that it was portrayed in such a way that when one uses it, one would be clean and satisfy the Christian virtue, “cleanliness is next to godliness” (Glenn, 2008). Therefore, one can argue that skin bleaching is a product of colonialism since people were conditioned to aspire to be white and hence bleached their skin.

Numerous studies conducted to date signify that skin bleaching is a widespread global phenomenon (Blay, 2011; de Souza, 2008; Lewis, Robkin, Gaska & Njoki, 2011; Ajose, 2005) and it is practised by both males and females. Although skin bleaching is rampant among the African people, it is also practised in Europe, America, and Asia (Blay, 2011). It has been confirmed by several studies conducted to date across the globe that many people seek to be fair-skinned or yellow bone rather than being black (Glen, 2008; de Souza, 2008; Bhagwandas, 2011; Dooley, 2001; Lewis, Robkin, Gaska & Njoki, 2011). Governments in some countries,

like Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, have restricted the importation and sale of cosmetics that contain mercury and hydroquinone (Dooley, 2010). Studies to investigate the consequences of skin bleaching have also been conducted across the globe, in an effort to highlight the effects that skin bleaching has on the health of people who engage in it (Mahe et al., 2003; Pitché, Kombate & Tchangai-Walla, 2005; Petit et al., 2006; de Souza, 2008; Hunter, 2011). Some complications caused by skin bleaching chemicals include facial acne, facial hypertrichosis and stretch marks (Del Guidice & Yves, 2002), kidney failure, glaucoma, menstrual irregularities and osteoporosis (Olumide et al., 2008) and many other complications. Regardless of these revelations, people still engage in skin bleaching practices.

It is evident from the literature reviewed above that skin bleaching is an ongoing practice and that more and more people aspire to be light-skinned. However, few or no studies are available which have tried to explore how it feels to be born light-skinned, and the lived experiences and stories of such people. That is, how does it feel to be born with light skin? Is it a skin that brings about advantages or perhaps disadvantages? And if there are any advantages, are those who engage in skin bleaching practices justified in doing so? Therefore, this study explored the experiences of those who have been born with light skin.

2.5 Skin bleaching and the media

Media, which includes television, radio, magazines, and social media platforms, plays a pivotal role in the flourishing phenomenon of skin bleaching. Skin lightening products are marketed in the media, and people are made aware of the perceived cultural, emotional, social, economic, and physical advantages brought about by being light in complexion (Hunter, 2011). These perceived advantages include, and are not limited to, increased pay in the workforce, marriage, social acceptance, and fame for celebrities. As a result, people make an effort to look fair and enjoy the attendant benefits.

Some celebrities across the globe engage in skin bleaching practices. Dayile, 2018 reported that there is much influence from the United States especially from Beyoncé, an American singer who referred to herself as a *yellow bone* (slang for light-skinned person) in her song “Transformation”. As a result, people are engaging in all sorts of skin alteration to achieve the look epitomised by Beyoncé. Also, combined with consumerism, the encouragement social media, cell phones, and other media devices with the roaming applications from Hollywood, Bollywood, and Nollywood, have increased the edge of one becoming a light-skinned person (Lewis et al., 2011). The celebrities that are shown on social media platforms are portrayed as

light-skinned, either by the use of make-up or they just choose those with light skin tone, thus signifying beauty causing people to yearn for that beauty and so they end up engaging in skin bleaching practices.

Furthermore, celebrities in South Africa like Kanyi Mbau, Mshoza, and many others have engaged in skin bleaching practices to lighten their complexions, thereby enjoying the perceived benefits of being light-skinned. According to Dayile, (2018), Kanyi Mbau said she was looking for the closest to perfection, and she reported that “I look better when I am lighter, I believe the brighter you are in appearance, the more you will stand out. At the end of the day, I am an entertainer and celebrity and to make money I need to stand out.” Like many others, Kanyi Mbau believes there are advantages to being light-skinned, and therefore this study explored those assertions by finding out from those that are privileged to be born with such skin tone if they enjoy similar benefits.

In addition, the MailOnline (Corner, 2016) news platform also reported about the South African rapper who disappeared from the public eye only to reappear with noticeably lighter skin,, and she told the editors that her new look had breathed new life into her career and had impacted positively on her career. Mshoza reported that it is a challenge to find employment if you are dark-skinned and that she had been through it. That is when she decided to change it and bleach her skin. Also, her public relations (PR) manager agreed with Mshoza sentiments and added that if you are a celebrity you have to be lighter because it looks good on the screen, be it TV or print (Corner, 2016). MailOnline (Corner, 2016) editor also spoke to another celebrity (name withheld), and she confirmed that being a yellow bone has its advantages; one is more visible to people, one increases his or her chances of being called to an interview and getting a job, and people treat you better.

Moreover, still on the issue of celebrities who skin bleach, the editor of MailOnline (Corner, 2016) interviewed yet another celebrity, and he concurred with celebrities mentioned above that having a light skin tone is advantageous. He stated that “When I compare my former self to now, I feel like I am more appealing now because I am lighter, the lighter, the better I think.” He confirmed that he found out about skin lighting creams on TV and decided to try it out (Corner, 2016). Therefore, advertisement plays an important role in the flourishing of skin bleaching because of the perceived advantages of having light skin.

In a bid to explain this media hype in the phenomenon of skin bleaching, Lewis et al. (2011) argued that colonialism is behind this because it left the African region vulnerable to Western

influences through the images that portray light-skinned individuals as beautiful and preferable. The internationally shared belief that White is the absolute form of beauty is perpetuated through Western media images including TV, radio, advertisements, cinema, and theatre, all of which are accessible through global satellite and other forms of communication (Lewis et al., 2011).

2.6 Perceived advantages of being light-skinned

Most of those who engage in skin bleaching argue that there are some advantages that are brought about by being light-skinned. Whether these advantages are real or imagined is the aim of this study; to find out from those that have been privileged to be born with such skin tone if there are any advantages or not. According to Davids, van Wyk and Khumalo (2016) people engage in skin lightening practices because they perceive that doing so increases their privileges, results in higher social standing, increases their chances of getting a job and also helps in attracting marital partners. In support of this, Pitché et al. (2005) purported that most African men and women regard light skin as being synonymous with beautiful and youthful. Therefore, to attain that beauty and youthfulness, some people engage in skin bleaching practices. Most of the creams used contain harmful chemicals that have adverse effects on human skin and health (Dlova, Hamed, Gwegweni, Grobler & Hift, 2014).

In addition, a study was conducted in Tanzania, which outlined several motivations as to why people engage in skin bleaching (Lewis et al., 2011). The results of that study showed that people bleach their skin to remove pimples, rashes, and skin diseases (Lewis et al., 2011). These ailments distort one's beauty, and since beauty is what most women yearn for they end up using chemical-based creams and soaps. The other reason why people lighten their skin, as emphasised in the study, is to be White, beautiful and more European (Lewis et al., 2011), which may be attributed to colonialisation where the Western people made the African people believe that being White was the embodiment of humanity (Hunter, 2002). More so, the study found out that people skin bleach in an endeavour to satisfy their partners and also to increase their chances to attract sexual partners (Lewis et al., 2011). In support of this assertion, Charles (2011) argued that the reason why people in Jamaica skin bleach is because fair skin brings about high status and sexual attractiveness. Another motivation for skin bleaching found in the study done in Tanzania (Lewis et al., 2011) is that people skin bleach to satisfy their peers and conform to the norms set by their peers. The interviewees in this study also indicated that they succumbed to pressure from their peers who are light-skinned because they enjoy benefits like

high status, increased income, better education opportunities, good jobs, and more friends. There is also a belief that these elevated possibilities are only achieved by those with light skin. Peer pressure is a rampant issue, especially among young adults, in that if their peers are engaging in certain behaviours to they also follow suit and try and fit in. According to Robinson (2011), the opinions of significant others matter to young people. Based on the foregoing, it is clear that people assume that being light-skinned brings about a positive outlook. However, it is interesting to find out what those who have been born with such a skin tone have to say, and these results are outlined in **Chapter 4**, followed by a detailed discussion of these results in **Chapter 5**.

Furthermore, people are identified and categorised in terms of their skin tone, and this has become a sociological challenge amongst the Black African people (Hunter, 2002). There is an assumption that light-skinned people are privileged and are at the top of social hierarchies and this belief continues to affect people who are dark-skinned because they are always looked down upon (Hunter, 2002). In most cases, these are social constructions brought about by the Europeans who came to Africa with their doctrines, which altered people's perceptions. This can also be attributed to internalised colonialism as Black people regard Europeans as superior and wish to be like them in all aspects of their lives because those misconceptions were instilled into them (Utsey et al., 2014). In support of the above argument, Hunter (2002) argued that light skin works as a form of social capital for women because those who possess it are regarded as beautiful and beauty is regarded as social capital (Hunter, 2002). Therefore, those who are light-skinned are believed to turn that social capital into economic capital, educational capital, and other forms of social capital like marriage. Consequently, those who are dark-skinned become envious of those who are light-skinned and invariably end up skin bleaching to also enjoy those perceived advantages. In addition, Thompson and Keith (2001) argued that during the slave trade in America, those Africans who were light-skinned were treated differently to their dark-skinned counterparts, in that they were mostly given nice domestic work and treated much better than the dark-skinned people. Because of these perceived advantages, it is the aim of this study to explore them to see if they are true from the viewpoint of those who are born light-skinned.

2.7 Summary and synthesis of the review

From the above review, it is clear that skin bleaching is a global phenomenon that affects both males and females across all walks of life. It was also highlighted that skin bleaching in Africa

can be attributed to colonialism as Europeans came to Africa, made them feel inferior and made them believe that whiteness was next to godliness. As a result, Black people envied the Whites and were eager to be like them; hence, some engage in skin bleaching practices. As much as skin bleaching can be attributed to colonialism, the impact of the media cannot be ignored. Celebrities and TV personalities have confirmed that appearance plays a pivotal role in shaping their careers, and thus some engage in skin bleaching to have a complexion they deem necessary for the big screen. In addition, most people who appear on magazine covers are photo-shopped, or make-up is applied to them to make them look paler instead of darker. It can also be hypothesised that people engage in skin bleaching practices because of the perceived advantages and privileges that light-skinned people enjoy. These advantages include social capital, getting better jobs that pay better, education attainment, attracting a marriage partner, and having lots of friends (Hunter, 2002). Thus, this study seeks to explore the experiences of those privileged to be born with light skin to ascertain if they enjoy any benefits and privileges.

2.8 Conceptual framework

The theoretical frameworks that guided this study are the theory of colorism, social advantages theory, and the self-esteem theory. These theories highlight some of the perceived advantages and privileges that people who have been born with light skin enjoy. They also try to account for the motivation of skin bleaching by dark-skinned people who perceive that there are advantages in being light-skinned. These theories will now be discussed below in detail.

The first theory to guide this study was the theory of colorism, which is defined as a process of discrimination that favours people with light skin over those who are dark-skinned (Hunter, 2005). Colorism rests on the premise that light-skinned people enjoy considerable privileges that are unobtainable by those who are dark-skinned (Hunter, 2007). Colorism is concerned with someone's complexion rather than their ethnicity or racial identity, and this distinction is important because race is a social concept not significantly tied to biology (Hirschman, 2004).

In addition, the theory of colorism suggests that among marginalised groups, there is a trend to differentiate people from one another based on their facial appearance or skin tone (Hunter, 2007). Thus, the theory of colorism assumes that because of people's negative experiences as a result of racial discernment, Black people have been accustomed to believe that having a lighter skin tone equates to beauty and brings about privileges (Wilder & Cain, 2011). Because having a lighter skin tone is accorded high regard, those who are dark-skinned are made to feel unworthy and valueless (Hunter, 2002; Mpengesi & Nzuza, 2014). For example, during the

apartheid era, Black people were exploited, bullied, mistreated, and discriminated against in comparison to White and Coloured people (Brown, 2000). This influenced Black people to learn and believe over time that the reason for their misfortune was due to their skin colour (race) and skin tone (colorism), especially since Coloured people were given preferential treatment over Black people (Julien, 2014). Also, the maintenance of White supremacy is predicated on the notion that dark skin represents savagery, irrationality, ugliness, and inferiority in contrast to white skin which is depicted as representing civility, rationality, beauty, and superiority. Therefore, colorism asserts that it is advantageous to have a light-skinned complexion.

Furthermore, Wilder and Cain (2011) state that Black families play a trivial role in socialising their children to be aware of their colour, such that the family too has come to uphold the skin colour hierarchy, that is to say, those who are light-skinned occupy the top positions in society. Thus, there is a rampant practice by Black people to lighten their skin because a lighter skin is regarded as being more fashionable (Robinson, 2011), and it is also perceived to offer social capital (Hunter, 2011) with which a person can secure a job, marriage partner and status in their community (AlGhamdi, 2010; Gwaravanda, 2011; Lewis et al., 2011).

The social advantage theory proposes that people who are born with light skin in the context of mate selection or friendship selection will have first preference compared to those who are dark-skinned. In this way, being born light-skinned confers an advantage in attracting a marriage partner. When there is mate selection competition, those who are born with yellow skin have an advantage compared to those who are born with dark skin (Nwoye, 2017 unpublished lecture notes). Therefore, it will be interesting to discover if this theory will be confirmed by (the results of the study) the views of the participants on the phenomenon of being light-skinned.

In addition, another theory to guide this study is the self-esteem theory (Nwoye, 2017 unpublished lecture notes). This theory suggests that people who are light-skinned tend to have positive self-esteem as compared to their counterparts who are born with dark skin. They seem to have a colour they are proud of in the context where being born with fair skin is preferred to being born with dark skin (Nwoye, 2017 unpublished lecture notes). To support this theory, Thompson and Keith (2001) conducted a study on African-American women on skin tone and self-esteem, and they found out that there is a connection between one's skin tone and self-esteem. That is, the lighter-skinned the woman is the higher her level of self-esteem. According

to Thompson and Keith (2001), self-esteem consists of feeling good, liking yourself, and being liked and treated well, and the participants of the study confirmed having these kinds of feelings. Therefore, a lighter complexion is associated with a higher feeling of perceived mastery (Thompson & Keith, 2001), which means being light-skinned is something held in high regard, and some people yearn for such skin tone and in order to achieve it, they resort to skin bleaching practices. Therefore, it will be interesting to establish if these assumptions will be confirmed or discredited by the results of this study.

2.9 Summary

Skin tone has been a phenomenon of public interest for a long time. One's skin tone has been used to determine one's position in the social structures and how one is treated (Thomas, 2008; Hunter, 2011). In addition, people are identified and categorised in terms of their skin tone, and this has become a sociological challenge amongst Black African people (Hunter, 2002). There is an assumption that light-skinned people are privileged and are on top of social hierarchies, and this continues to affect people who are dark-skinned because they are always looked down upon (Hunter, 2002). These points are supported by theories like the colorism theory (Hunter, 2005), the social advantage theory (Nwoye, 2017) and the self-esteem theory (Nwoye, 2017) in that all these theories concur with each other that if one is light in complexion one enjoys some benefits that other people do not enjoy. Therefore, this study seeks to explore if the results of this study will confirm these theories.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The systematic, theoretical analysis of methods that are applied to a field of study is referred to as the methodology of the study. This section of the study outlines the methods that the researcher used to answer the research questions. It also captured the theoretical paradigm that guided and informed the researcher's choice of research design and data analysis techniques. A detailed and precise account of the research process, design, data collection, data management, and analysis was highlighted.

3.2 Research paradigm

In this study, the researcher aimed to explore the experiences, stories, and understanding of those people who have been born with light skin normally referred to as '*yellow bones*' among the UKZN registered Black South African students, both undergraduates, and post-graduates. For this reason mentioned above, the researcher made use of the narrative phenomenological approach. Phenomenological approach is concerned with the lived experiences of people who have experienced the phenomenon under study in general (Greene, 1997; Holloway, 1997; Kruger, 1988; Kvale, 1983; Robinson, 2011), but narrative phenomenological approach is interested in the manner in which people make sense of their experience and what stories they have to tell from that experience (Iser, 1972). The intention of a phenomenological study is to have an understanding of the phenomenon and provide a description of human experiences as it is experienced by the person and allowing the essence to emerge (Husserl, 1970). The justification for using this paradigm was that it provided with a very detailed description of the experiences and how people feel about their experience of being born with a light or fair skin. Furthermore, it helped the researcher extract the results of the study from the data gathered rather than imposing it to structured analysis tools such as SPSS, that is, the researcher made sense of the data collected.

3.3 Design of the study

A qualitative design method was used for the purpose of this study. According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006) qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they

live in. In-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to explore the experiences of the people born with light skin. The rationale for using qualitative design was that it provided in-depth analysis of the experiences of relatively small numbers of participants and the researcher was in a position to address the phenomena in a meaningful and non-reductionist way (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

3.4 Location of the study

The study was conducted at the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), South Africa. The reason for choosing this campus was because of the proximity of the researcher since she lives in Pietermaritzburg. It also addressed the financial constraints of the researcher. The research included registered Black South African students, both undergraduate and post-graduate, who live on campus and those who live off-campus.

3.4.1 Study population

The population of the University of KwaZulu-Natal comprises of mixed races which are Black (the majority), Indian, White and Coloured students and staff (Mulwo, 2009 as cited in Mutinta, Govender, Gow, & George, 2012). The study target population for this study was, however, Black registered students both undergraduates and post-graduates who are light in complexion, including males and females. The sample population consisted of students who were 18 years and older, and participation was voluntary.

3.4.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Selection of participants for this study was based on the following criteria: (a) registered University of KwaZulu-Natal Black South African students, both undergraduates and post-graduates, on the Pietermaritzburg campus; (b) should be Black and either male and female; (c) over the age of 18 years; and (d) should be light-skinned. The study excluded Black students, both undergraduates, and post-graduates who are dark-skinned. The study focused on those who are born naturally with light skin and not those who acquired light skin through the use of skin lightening chemicals. The study was based on voluntary participation, and those who are light-skinned have the autonomy to participate or not.

3.5 Sampling technique and sample size

Sampling is the selection of research participants from the target population and involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours, and social processes to observe

(Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The sampling technique that was used was the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases or participants related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). To ensure that those sampled into the study (people with information-rich cases) are not those that have light skin colour through bleaching, every effort was made through gentle inquiry on the part of the researcher to find out from any potential participant whether their skin is through natural endowment or skin bleaching. Those who felt anxious, provoked and discomfort as a result of the above question were not recruited into the study as the researcher had some misgivings that their skin colour was not as a result of natural endowment. On the other hand, those who responded to the question in a friendly manner with pride and comfort were understood to have their skin colour naturally by birth and were therefore recruited into the study. Consequently, the final decision about who would be recruited into the study was not decided by mere appearance, but was negotiated and verified in the humane manner outlined above.

Furthermore, “using the logic of intensity purposive sampling, one seeks excellent or rich examples of the phenomenon of interest to the study” (Patton, 2001). Following this understanding, an intensity sample of 12 participants from the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus student community was recruited to take part in this study. Initially, 20 participants were recruited, but in the actual study process, only 12 participants turned up giving the researcher a decent sample size; besides, qualitative studies make use of small sample size because it is easier to transcribe the data and analyse it. The rationale behind using intensity purposive sampling was that the UKZN student community is composed of those who are born with light skin and those who are not; and, since the study focused only those with a light-skin colour presentation, intensity purposive sampling was the best sampling technique. It helped the researcher target only the excellent or rich examples of people with light skin colour under attention (Patton, 2001).

3.5.1 Recruitment and data collection strategy

To have access to the potential respondent participants to the study, a special technique for reaching them was used. This special technique is called raid technique. By raid technique, the researcher means that she visited target viable sites where potential participants could be found, and these sites included the university library, LANs and lecture theatres when there were no lectures in progress. Upon arrival at these sites the researcher stood afar and scouted (raided)

for those people who met the intensity sample criteria set for the study (light-skinned) and if any potential participant was noticed he or she was approached (Nwoye, 2016, unpublished lecture notes). The details of the study were explained to them, and thereafter they were asked if they were interested in participating in the study. Those who agreed to participate in the study were then recruited into the study. They were then formally requested to set a time convenient to them for the researcher to conduct the interviews. Before the interviews commenced, the researcher reminded the participants what the research entailed as stated in the information sheet (attached in **Appendix 1**), the voluntariness of participation and an opportunity was given for informed consent and withdrawal from the research at any given time. Thereafter, the participants were requested to sign the informed consent form (attached in **Appendix 2**). Afterwards, the data was collected by asking the participants semi-structured questions.

The interviews were audio-taped with the permission of the participants and permission was sought prior to recording and an audio recording consent form was signed. The audio consent form is attached in **Appendix 3**. Additionally, the researcher took some notes in the course of the interview process. The rationale behind using semi-structured questions was because of the nature of the study since there was no single answer to each participant's experience. Semi-structured questions helped the researcher to explore other themes on the phenomenon under study that the researcher had not thought about before the interview but which themes emerged as a follow-up to the questions posed to the participants. The proposed interview schedule is attached below as **Appendix 4**.

3.6 Research rigor/ Quality criteria

To ensure rigour in qualitative research, it is important to address credibility, dependability and transferability issues (Silverman, 2006).

3.6.1 Credibility

To promote credibility, the researcher needs to ensure that the findings are congruent with the data (Silverman, 2006). In this study, several provisions were made to ensure the credibility of the findings. Shenton (2004) argues that using well established qualitative research methods is important in ensuring that the correct data will be collected accurately. This study employed an in-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews schedule. Shenton (2004) further states that taking steps to ensure honesty from participants when they contribute data will also ensure that the data collected represents the phenomenon under study. In this study, participants were given

an opportunity to refuse to participate or to discontinue their participation anytime if they did not feel comfortable. This ensured that all participating informants were willing and voluntarily prepared to participate. In addition, extracts have been presented to support the research findings to show how the researcher came to these conclusions about the data. Without the supporting extracts, it would be difficult for the reader to judge the extent to which findings are congruent with the data.

3.6.2 Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research refers to consistency in the research findings when the study is replicated under similar conditions (Silverman, 2006). To ensure the dependability of this study, the aims, rationale, and research questions were clearly stated and connected logically to the research methodology. The context where the study was conducted has been clearly described; the study population and sample characteristics and data collection processes have been clearly discussed. The thorough explanation of the methods used to translate the material to be used and to collect the information was intended to make it easier for another researcher to replicate this study.

3.6.3 Transferability

According to Silverman (2006) transferability in qualitative research refers to the extent to which research findings are applicable to similar people in other contexts. Due to the purposive sampling technique and the collection of data using in-depth one on one interview, the researcher was able to collect data from an eligible and willing sample of participants. The participants were those born light-skinned students from UKZN, on the Pietermaritzburg campus and willing to participate in the study exploring their experiences. Even though the sample size was relatively small, it was still acceptable for a qualitative inquiry. The small sample size also means that the findings of this study can cautiously be applied to other similar contexts with similar participants. Transferability of the findings was enhanced by the researcher clearly stating the sampling and recruitment process, and adequately explaining the data collection and analysis process.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of evaluating data using analytical and logical reasoning to analysis. This is just one of many steps that must be completed when conducting research. Data from various sources is gathered, reviewed and then analysed to extract findings and draw conclusions (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The data analysis technique that was used to analyse findings of this study was the interpretive phenomenology analysis (IPA). This technique involves detailed examination of the participant's life-world, it attempts to explore personal experiences and is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the objects or events themselves (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The analysis of this study was done in stages. The first stage was transcribing the data and reading the data multiple times to make sense of it (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). At the first stage, the researcher was immersed in the data, recalling the atmosphere of the interview and the setting in which it was conducted (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). The researcher also made notes about her observations and reflections about the interview experience. The second stage requires the researcher to transform the notes into emergent themes and the last stage consists of seeking relationship and clustering the themes (Kvale, 1983). The rationale for using this technique was that it enabled the researcher to explore in detail how participants made sense of their lived personal experiences of being born light skinned (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

3.8 Ethical considerations

To ensure that high ethical standards were met during the course of the study, every effort was made to avoid exploitation of the participants. This was achieved by following the ethical principles proposed by Emanuel, Wendler & Grady (2000) and how these principles were satisfied in the study is discussed below. The autonomy of the participants was achieved by obtaining their *informed consent* to take part in the study (Neuman, 2007). Participation was through voluntariness and the participants were free to withdraw from the study at any given time. The researcher obtained consent to record the interviews and if not obtained the researcher could not record them resulting in the participant being withdrawn because due to the nature of the study the researcher would not be able to write down everything the participant said. The researcher explained those things to the participants, and a copy was made available which, after ensuring understanding of the information provided, the participant signed. A copy

of the consent form has been attached in **Appendix 3** and the audio consent in **Appendix 4**. The *social value* of the study was enhanced by notifying the participants that the study would generate knowledge on the aspect of skin bleaching and possibly help researchers to have a deeper understanding of why people engage in skin bleaching practices.

To satisfy the principle of *risk-benefit ratio*, the researcher made sure that no harm was done to the participants. No harm was caused to the participants, however, as a precautionary measure, the participants were provided with contact details of counselors they could see if they needed any counselling. The study benefited the participants in that it afforded them an opportunity to reflect or think about what it meant to be born with light skin. It had the potential to make them feel appreciated and help boost their pride, self-esteem and confidence. *Respect* for participants was ensured by explaining to the participants that their participation was voluntary and they could opt out at any time without penalties. Their confidentiality was protected by using pseudonyms and recordings of the interview were accessible to the researcher and the supervisor and no other parties. The recordings were deleted once there was no further use for the information. A copy of the final thesis will be deposited at the UKZN (PMB campus) library so that interested participants are able to get feedback on the results of the study. Additionally, the researcher gave the participants her UKZN e-mail address which they could use to contact her should they be interested in getting personal feedback regarding the outcome of the study. Permission to record the interviews was sought before the interviews were conducted and participants had the option of declining being recorded (**Appendix 4**). The researcher upheld ethical standards by in the first instance obtaining informed consent before commencement of the study to use an audio recording device. Secondly, confidentiality was promoted by protecting the participants' identities through the use of pseudonyms, and by not divulging any personal information that would make the participants identifiable. Thirdly, to keep strict access and control over gathered data and other confidential information, the collected data and records were kept in a safe lockable cabinet with access limited only to the researcher and the supervisor. Lastly, the data will be kept for five years by the supervisor after which it will be discarded by means of shredding and deleting data from the server using IT software that will erase it from the hard drive of the computer. The limitation of this study is that since it is a qualitative study it is not possible to generalise to other settings. It is also difficult to ascertain whether the participants were being truthful in their responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It outlines the descriptive analysis of the study done with the students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) on the Pietermaritzburg campus. The results of the study will be outlined based on the research questions of the study. The research questions are:

1. What are the lived experiences of UKZN students who were born light-skinned; In particular how does it feel to be born light-skinned?;
2. What are possible advantages of being born a light-skinned child as perceived by those with such skin colour?;
3. What are the possible disadvantages and challenges associated with being light-skinned?

The participants' responses are collated into themes in response to these research questions. This chapter also provides the descriptive analysis of distribution of respondents and the summary and implications of the findings.

4.2 Descriptive analysis of distribution of respondents

The study consisted of 12 participants of which six were females and six were males. The researcher had to balance out the number of participants but due to low response rate in males only the ones that came for the interviews were used. All the participants were Black Africans who were extremely light-skinned because they were the ones that matched the sampling criteria used. Furthermore, all the participants were from the Pietermaritzburg campus and they were all students. The participants were asked open-ended questions and the challenge was that most participants had difficulty expressing themselves in English which affected the quality of data gathered. All the participants used pseudonyms and not their real names. The details of these participants will be presented in the following table:

Participant Name (Pseudonym)	Gender
Lisa	Female
Martha	Female
Mbali	Female
Rose	Female
Azi	Female
Nokwazi	Female
Ayanda	Male
Kwanda	Male
Vee	Male
Blue	Male
Candy	Male
Xoli	Male

4.3 Presentation of results research question

4.3.1 Research question one:

What are the lived experiences of UKZN students who are born light-skinned? In particular, how does it feel to be born a light-skinned child?

In order to answer this question themes were gathered from the interviews conducted with the participants. These themes will now be outlined as follows:

4.3.1.1 Theme one: Being light-skinned brings a positive feeling

Most participants alluded that being light-skinned brings about a positive feeling when they are around people. To support this:

Lisa, a female participant, points out that:

“...aaa (.) to be honest (.) eish its very complex because there is been always an underlined or like a subconscious pleasant feeling about being light skinned because of how we have been always taught that no the lighter the better even if looking at it from a bigger demographic or bigger geographic manner, yaa it’s more than just being light-skinned. It’s one thing less to worry about if you are light skinned.”

Also in the same vein Ayanda, a male participant, alluded to the same point when he said:

“...well personally I think I don’t have any certain feelings about it but I do notice that when you there is that welcoming, that acceptance, that positive outlook of who you are that you receive from just anyone...”

4.3.1.2 Theme two: Being light-skinned makes one stand out

From the data gathered it was confirmed that being light-skinned makes one stand out and become noticed among a group of people. By the expression standing out, the researcher meant that in the company of other people who are not light-skinned, a light-skinned person is like an odd one out. A number of extracts supports the above-mentioned notion:

Rose, a female participant, was the first to point this out:

“...it makes me feel like I stand out...”

More so Vee, a male participant, agrees with Rose’s assertion that being light-skinned makes one stand out and become recognised among a group of people:

“...ja growing up being light-skinned kids will always go for light-skinned people like when in a team they are like no you come this side, they don’t even know your skills in soccer just because you are light-skinned they want you in the team because there is also girls watching so it’s the best team overall you know so uhmm also when it comes to other games growing up you know they will pick you being light-skinned not the dark child...”

In addition, Ayanda stated that:

“...uhmm I cant single out one but what would happen is that people tend to point out if I would say something that comes to my head right now people tend to point out, if you with a group of people, they will tend to point you, they will tend to single you out in that group like waal that person is lighter skinned so there is that thing of you always being selected and singled out somehow, they will always mention you if you are with other people they will always say you look like this in relation to others...”

Kwanda, a male participant, also concurred in the similar sentiments as above when he said:

“...you get noticed first, it's like you shine out of the blue, within a crowd you stand out...”

Lastly, Lisa shared the same view when she was talking about her friend who is lighter than her. She said:

“...and every time like everywhere we go people notice her first like all the time all the time I am not making this up and guys will be like hello yellow you know when you are both light-skinned but some would recognise that you both light-skinned and say (Bo yellow) which means light-skinned people and it's just that thing where it's like you attract attention wherever you go you don't have to open your mouth the moment you show up people see you sometimes for the good reason sometimes not but obviously I don't know what would be a good reason for people seeing you because you light-skinned but it's just you just recognised. ((Laughs))”

4.3.1.3 Theme three: Feelings of not belonging and name calling in the company of dark-skinned people

When asked about how being light-skinned makes them feel, some participants echoed some sentiments that it makes them feel like they don't belong, they are different from others and hence it promotes some name calling. Some extracts that highlight these sentiments are produced below.

Rose stated that:

“...often it's challenging because individuals don't recognise me as part of the siblings...”

“...it makes me feel horrible you know sometimes I wish I was like the others...”

In the same light Kwanda supports the idea that when you are light-skinned one struggles to fit in. He said:

“...because it’s not everywhere where you can feel like fit in, you know, so there are certain times where I try to fit in with other guys because I am light skinned, and they are dark skinned, and it becomes a problem...”

Similarly, Lisa asserts that when you are light-skinned people will assume that you belong to another race other than being Black, hence, you don’t belong to the Black race. This can be gleaned from the following comment:

“...this thing has to do more about racial preferences because if ok fine there are light African people I don’t know how far back genetics would say about their pigmentation but the whole thing about being light-skinned for most people there is a belief that somewhere somehow your forefathers slept with a white man so somewhere somehow you have white blood which means you are mixed which means you are closer to being white than the dark person whose purely just black person...”

Pertaining to the name calling some participants agreed that they have been called different names at some point. The name calling to some they take it negatively and to some they take it in a positive light. Azi, a female participant, in support of this said:

“...ja but with they called me (ummbovane) which means extremely yellow bone yaa and I didn’t care and it didn’t matter for but for him it mattered when someone called him umnyamane...”

Rose also confirmed that being light-skinned prompts people to call you names. She stated that:

“...man asked for my phone number and I refused so in retaliation the man called me a slut because I was light-skinned because his experiences with light-skinned people is that they are sluts...”

Also, Kwanda confirmed that when you are light-skinned you are prone to being called names and he said:

“...you prone they give this name cheese boy I think you are familiar with this name?”

In addition, Lisa also asserts that when you are light-skinned people call you names. This is evident when she said:

“...guys will be like hello yellow you know when you are both light-skinned but some would recognise that you both light-skinned and say bo yellow which means light-skinned people...”

Moreover, Mbali a female participant asserted that she has been called names due to her being light-skinned. She said:

“...so that’s kind of different treatment I got because they even called me names umlungu meaning White person...”

4.3.1.4 Theme four: The fairer the better – a social construction

From the information gathered it is noticeable that society has constructed a notion that when you are light-skinned it equates to beauty. Many participants assert that it is not them that appraise themselves but society around them; according to participants society thinks if you are light-skinned you are better than others. The first participant to echo this was Lisa who said:

“...society says if she lighter she will have a lesser hard time but if she is smart enough she can have the best time either way yaa... If you are light-skinned people just expect you to like nicer things or have nicer things or when you have nicer things they less likely to think that you stole it or something... I don’t know society just let you off very easily...”

To support the above assertion Martha, a female participant, said:

“...not really it’s just some family members thinks that when you are light-skinned it means that you are beautiful...”

In addition, Mbali said:

“...well if you are light-skinned people perceive you as more like I don’t know like you are beautiful, like you are privileged, like you have a great skin and stuff...”

Similarly, Vee said:

“...I feel like they expect you to be... like to show where you actually grew up since we live in a western culture they expect you to have good English not to just talk to you know to approach people in a suitable manner you know they expect all different high categories of you, you know...”

Likewise, Rose said:

“...firstly there is a perception that being light-skinned is equivalent to beauty so automatically there is an assumption that you are beautiful because you are light-skinned... People expect me to be pretty, people expect me to speak well, and people expect me to carry myself as a lady people expect me to run after men, people expect me to run after blessers...”

Nokwazi, a female participant, confirms the notion that society thinks being light-skinned is beautiful when she said:

“...because society sees light as more beautiful than dark...”

4.3.1.5: Theme five: Marriage partner preference

It is expected that light-skinned people would instinctively seek out a light-skinned partner when it comes to choose a mating partner. From the data gathered it is not a blueprint phenomenon because almost every female participant said they prefer dark-skinned partners, although males had mixed feelings regarding this notion. The first participant to echo her preference when it comes to choosing a marriage partner was Lisa who said:

“...I will definitely marry someone who is dark-skinned... Yaa I don’t know uum it’s an actual thing that I have taken notice among other females. When you are young you want a light-skinned guy they are cute, they have pink lips, they have nice skin and they are light and look cleaner remember that thing I said about clean... But when you grow up, they look like sissies because you don’t want a man who is just clean. Cleanliness would mean he doesn’t work, you remember the whole thing I said about farms and all that so you what a man that’s gonna work. Females as a species, I don’t know if females can be called a species ((laughs)) humans kee. Females is a gender and the way we before civilization in the primitive state you want a provider, you want to be protected, you want someone who is going to fend for you so dark-skinned guys means they can work you know there is that hard work thing going on that strongness like yesss...”

Likewise, Martha confirmed that she prefers dark-skinned males for a marriage partner. She said:

“...my fiancée is dark-skinned like dark dark... It’s like I don’t like yellow bone men I don’t like light-skinned men I don’t at all, I just don’t like them the colour just on men like the skin colour on men it’s just something else no no I don’t think I will date a very light-skinned man. I don’t know I don’t really think so I really think they are women

maybe I don't know ((laughs)) but eehee I wouldn't date a light-skinned man, like light-skinned man no I prefer them dark..."

Also, Rose said:

"...I would... my preferences will be dark-skinned men, they are physically attractive and yaa you know African men, dark-skinned men are physically attractive..."

Azi had this to say:

"...my boyfriend is dark-skinned so yes and I feel like all my friends date dark-skinned guys and most of us are yellow bones so it doesn't matter. I think at some point in our lives because we do talk about it at some point in our lives we feel like ok when we were growing up we liked yellow-skinned like Chris Brown but I think we got over it because everyone was like we like them dark now. So I think for most yellow bones they prefer dating dark-skinned guys. I think they look much more nicer like Idris Elba I know he is old it's just an example ((laughs)) we like them I don't know for me I felt like I have outgrown the yellow bone guys they are childish most of them are really childish cause of their skin colour they think that they are hot so yaa."

Xoli, when asked if he will marry a light-skinned lady, had this to say:

"Never! I will never date a light-skinned and marry a light-skinned person, Ok I thinks it's because they like attention females like attention. You know as a person now from what I have experienced I like dark-skinned girls not because I like something opposite from what I am but then because uhmm you can say that I maybe thinking for them, for my children yet to come, yaa I wouldn't like my children to be light-skinned..."

On the contrary, Vee had a different opinion when it comes to choosing a marriage partner. He said:

Well looking at a perspective as a guy from a guy us guys likes women so women will obviously go for light-skinned guys. I would marry a light-skinned... I don't know but I just find them really attractive you know I think I have never seen, never came to a point where I have seen like a really attractive dark person.

4.3.1.6 Theme 6: Being light-skinned is natural and not different from other complexions

The participants of this study echo a sentiment that they view being light-skinned as natural and not different to other complexions. This response was prompted by the question on how they feel about being light-skinned. Nokwazi in support of this said:

“I think because I don’t know anything else outside of this, for me it’s just normal, I was born like this and it’s not really special because it’s just a skin colour...”

Also Vee said:

“Waal I feel like being light-skinned like being a normal person you know even if I was dark I would feel the same way and all my experiences are the same, I just treat life the way a normal person would you know. Everything is just the same like a normal person I don’t see myself as better than another person so ja.”

In addition, Martha said:

“...to me it’s just a skin colour I think it’s just how that it just the way that God made me. I don’t think it’s that I should get any preferential treatment or it means that I am beautiful or maybe I am dumb or what. I just feel it’s just a colour sometimes I don’t even realise that I am light-skinned it’s just I am like most other people...”

4.3.2 Research question two:

What are the possible advantages of being born light-skinned as perceived by those born with such a skin colour?

This section outlines the advantages of being light-skinned as perceived by the participants who were light-skinned. These advantages will be put into themes and will be outlined below.

4.3.2.1 Theme one: Society lets you off very easily

To support the above sentiments Lisa said:

“I never get the look like aaa gal why are you wearing dirty stuff they just think it’s cute maybe if someone dark was to do it they will judge I don’t know maybe I am being shallow. I don’t know society just let you off very easily...”

In support of this, Martha said:

“he he he for being light-skinned obviously obviously ((laughs)) sometimes it works in your favour because some people they just like light-skinned people, they just think that light-skinned people maybe the thing of being beautiful or what sometimes maybe if you

are walking maybe to an office and you find especially men. Men are enticed by people who are light-skinned so sometimes if you want it can work in your favour but sometimes it can work against you because others have those connotations like bad thoughts about you being a yellow bone or light-skinned...”

Mbali added:

“...but mostly it will be advantageous for the obvious reasons that I have said that obviously because people will treat you better than the others I think...”

Ayanda also said:

“...but with negatives they seem not to be much of them because there is this general positiveness that goes with you are light-skinned therefore somehow most of good things coming your way...”

4.3.2.2 Theme two: Being light-skinned gets you opportunities

Participants highlighted that being light-skinned is often coupled with better or increased access to opportunities in life. These opportunities include getting jobs, favours, having more friends, among other things. Rose alluded to this point and she said:

“...the advantage in that is that you often obtain opportunities quicker than others, when I go and submit applications for waitressing at restaurants I often get the calls before any of the dark-skinned girls... because I think the managers at the restaurants think that appearances is important and to them being light-skinned is perceived as an elevated status...”

Nokwazi added:

“...I would like to say no but I would be lying ((laughs))... especially when it comes to jobs, promotions especially... I think the people who scout for promoters use skin colour as one of their criteria... because most of the girls that I find myself working with are also my complexion...”

Lisa also agreed with the notion that when you are light-skinned you can access a lot of opportunities and she said:

“...yaa I would say that, that’s why you find a lot of people that are not as beautiful but because they are light-skinned you find them in magazine they are getting all the opportunities on TV and stuff...”

Ayanda also added:

“...you should be the one, there is that and there is also when you try out new things like fashion and stuff when taking photos those kind of social stuff people will tend to have a positive regard of you if you are lighter-skinned with looks of course... yes they is a preference for light skin because it’s associated with beauty so with regards to my own experiences...”

4.3.2.3 Theme three: Being light-skinned makes it easy to get a partner

From the data gathered, especially among the male respondents, they agreed that if one is light-skinned it is easy for them to get a female partner. The first one to comment on this was Vee.

Vee said:

“...waal it’s actual the women that I see as an advantage cause you get prettier women and you get variety of them even dark women as you approach them, they actual approach you instead of you approaching them... So I will take that as an advantage if you are a guy whose get to speak to women because women actually approach you if you are light-skinned and uhmm also when it comes to... yaa that thing right now I think that’s what I have right now he he he...”

Kwanda supported this by saying:

“...yeah I will go straight to the point, okay uhmm from females it’s really advantageous like it gives you a platform were you can relate, they usually associate light-skinned with beauty if I may say so it’s kind of easy...”

Ayanda also alluded to this point:

“...if I would make that example if you are lighter-skinned they will expect you to get a number or something but if you are darker-skinned its ok for you somehow for you to fail not to get the number he he he because maybe they will assume that aaa maybe you just too dark but if you are light-skinned there is that thing that if you do something it will somehow happen it will be successful, if you try your lucky and get a number from a girl you should get it unlike a dark-skinned person...”

Blue also had this to say:

“...the thing is if you are light-skinned you get to pick and choose, ladies just flock to you so for a light-skinned person it’s easy to get a partner so yaa it’s an advantage...”

4.3.2.4 Theme four: Being light-skinned gets you more associates

Participants reported that if you are light-skinned more people want to associate with you and become friends with you.

To support this assertion Mbali said:

“...well you get to have so many friends... yaa people want to be friends with you, they just want to be seen walking with you like I don’t know but I don’t know what I can call it aaa among us black people a lighter person is better, it’s better to associate with them I mean, you get help especially yaa especially to the other gender which is men yaa...”

In addition Azi concurred with the above and said that:

“...I am going to be honest not all of them but some do I feel that cause I remember we were at Cubana once we were sitting with some guys and buying us free drinks of course and these girls they came actually they came first and they were sitting with the guys, the guys asked us to join them – mind you all my friends are yellow bones it’s not because we choose each other because we yellow bone but it’s just a coincidence – and we went there and when we got there the guys called us and we joined them and they started saying that arghh these yellow people so I felt envied at that time I really did...”

More so, Lisa added:

“...with girls I have a friend who would actually say I don’t like ugly friends so you are my friend because you are pretty so I don’t know if pretty in her case is because I am light-skinned or whatever I don’t know but if you say prettiness equates light skin in my case or other light-skinned cases then yes I get privileges from my peers...”

In support of the above assertion Vee said:

“...ja growing up being light-skinned kids will always go for light-skinned people like when in a team they are like no you come this side, they don’t even know your skills in soccer just because you are light-skinned they want you in the team because there is also girls watching so it’s the best team overall you know so uhmm also when it comes to other games growing up you know they will pick you being light-skinned...”

4.3.2.5 Theme five: Being light-skinned gives a positive outlook

Participants reported that being light-skinned comes with a positive feeling when they are among dark people.

Ayanda stated:

“...well personally I think I don’t have any certain feelings about it but I do notice that when you there, there is that welcoming, that acceptance, that positive outlook of who you are that you receive from just anyone... yes they are many of them, I would say when you are lighter skin people generally have a positive outlook of maybe you tend to look better than other people, you tend to be open view would be like you will represent maybe family, you will represent a certain group of people like if you are lighter skin...”

Lisa in support of the above said:

“...umm I would say at home aaaa we have become like a favourite. As you grow up for no reason people would like to buy you clothes more because you make everything look better obviously better as per the constructs of the society fairer the better so like any colour put against any light-skinned person apparently looks very nice. So people just wanna do your hair more they just wanna help you look better as you can cause you kinda have that advantage already...”

In addition Blue said:

“...yes there is that idea that you are somehow, you are not the ugliest person out there he he he just because you look this way. Yaa people tend to be less judgemental if you are light-skinned... Ummm I can't single out one but what will happen is that people will tend to point out if I will maybe say something that comes to my head right now, people tend to point out that like if you are in a group of people they tend to point out, they will single you out like waal that person is lighter-skinned than others. So there is that thing of you always being selected somehow, singled out, they always mention you if you are with other people, they will always say you look like this in relation to others...”

Also Rose added:

“...so there is always a need for them to want to take care of me and ensure that I am doing alright, and to make sure that I am pampered...”

More so, Azi said:

“...uhmm I would say most negative jokes don't go towards the light-skinned person, they go towards much darker-skinned person. Just growing up if I could remember growing up, the most person who would feel embarrassed by themselves will be the darker person, the lighter-skinned people don't get as much negative jokes.”

4.3.3 Research question three:

What are the possible disadvantages and challenges associated with being light-skinned?

While participants agreed that there are some advantages to being light-skinned, they also highlighted that there are also some disadvantages and challenges to this. As in the advantages section, the disadvantages will be collated into themes.

4.3.3.1 Theme one: If you are light-skinned you are underestimated

Participants have reported that because of their skin colour they are at times underestimated in that they are regarded as people who cannot do certain things and their achievements are due to favours given to them rather than their own potential.

In support of this Azi said:

“...yes you are underestimated aaa most females challenge you the minute you show up they are on the defence coz you are light. There is that thing that maybe the whole room think you the best thing especially in terms of males. So all the females around you will instantly ((clicks fingers)) be defensive and undermine you and then fun enough if you go to like rural areas...”

Similarly Lisa stated:

“...if you are light-skinned they don't think you can work as hard as they can because most of the time I don't know I think it goes back to the thing that lighter people stay in the house and they do less work than the people that go outside. So I think somewhere there is that, but you really underestimate that as a light-skinned, like even your accomplishments it's hardly ever the case that people think you got it because you can you know. They probably think that you have a connection of some sort, you flashed your smile or your light-skinned boob ((laughs)) somewhere and you got that job or you got that car. It's hardly ever the case that you can do stuff unless people know you but I don't know maybe that's just my observation but people just underestimate you because you are light-skinned or maybe sometimes they like you because you are light-skinned and not because you can do stuff. You know they never like you on merits, it's always like a privilege being light-skinned. That doesn't sound like a disadvantage but it is because at some point you want to be recognised for what you can do.”

Also Ayanda said:

“...well in the rural context I think it's kind of opposite that social desirability it's much lenient towards being darker he he he if you are light-skinned in the rural context they tend to think about you as a person who ok as I am a guy they think of me as a weak person, a person who doesn't go down in dirty and will maybe call me cheese boy those are...”

In addition Mbali said:

“...whenever there are things to be done at home, especially like ceremony of some sort the whole family is together, they won't expect me and my sisters to be able to do things cause they will be like aaa lo balungu laba (which means these white people) just

because we light-skinned and all the other people will be like no one will expect us to know these things...

Rose added:

“...there is a perception as if I am a baby, I am the baby and I am unable to do things for myself, so there is always a need for them to want to take care of me and ensure that I am doing alright, and to make sure that I am pampered...”

4.3.3.2 Theme two: Being treated like someone with loose morals

When asked about what were the disadvantages of being born with a light-skin, some participants said they are considered as people with loose morals.

Rose had this to say:

“...yes there is a stigma as well that yellow bones are into blessers, yellow bones like money, yellow bones are loose and manipulate men, that we are loose...”

In support Lisa said:

“...they probably think that you have a connection of some sort, you flashed your smile or your light-skinned boob ((laughs)) somewhere and you got that job or you got that car. It's hardly ever the case that you can do stuff unless people know you but I don't know maybe that's just my observation but people just underestimate you because you are light-skinned or maybe sometimes they like you because you are light-skinned and not because you can do stuff...”

Martha added:

“...the one thing I hate ha ha ha the one thing that I hate about being light-skinned it's just men especially think that you are like maybe like you are beautiful you are like those girls who are into blessers, you don't have a mind of your own like you are blonde in some way so they tend to take advantage. Sometimes others just pester you for no apparent reason...”

Nokwazi also said:

“...people think being light-skinned is associated with being dumb, people who don't really like school, who are into older men, who are into possessions like Brazilian hairs,

big nails, long nails whatever so that's one thing I don't like about being light-skinned is what light is associated with..."

4.3.3.3 Theme three: Prone to name calling and sexual harassment

The participants, especially females, indicated that because of their skin colour they are subjected to name calling and sexual harassment. The first participant to talk about this was Rose. She said:

"...yes aaa the one evening my peers and I we went to eat at a restaurant for supper then aaa a man asked for my phone number and I refused so in retaliation the man called me a slut because I was light-skinned because his experiences with light-skinned people is that they are sluts... another incident that often you can't walk down the street without being approached by a man without being sexually harassed..."

Kwanda added:

"...you see when you light-skinned you prone to be bullied, they give you this name cheese boy I think you are familiar with this name..."

Ayanda supported the above assertion:

"...a person who doesn't go down in dirty and will maybe call me cheese boy..."

Azi also said she was called names although she did not mind it; it just proves the point that if you are light-skinned you are prone to name calling.

Azi said:

"...ja but with they called me (ummbovane) which means extremely yellow bone yaa and I didn't care and it didn't matter..."

Blue supported this:

"...actually I can, I was walking down Golf road and when I was walking there was a lady who had an accomplice, a dark-skinned accomplice, so I didn't do anything. Actually I just walking past and this lady started greeting me. So this guy was like ohh because you are yellow bone so you can take our girls and I was like it's not like that I was just greeting and it escalated..."

In addition Mbali said:

“...so I think I have been, especially by other kids who are my age aaa because some of them would wish that they were a bit lighter light like me yaa so that’s kind of different treatment I got because they even called me names (umlungu) which means white person...”

Mbali added:

“...and guys will be like hello yellow you know when you are both light-skinned but some would recognise that you both light-skinned and say bo yellow which means light-skinned people...”

4.3.3.4 Theme four: Proving yourself more than anyone else

Participants in this study highlighted that if you are light-skinned people do not believe in your capabilities; they think you have achieved something because you received favours flowing from the fact that you are light-skinned. As a result you have to go the extra mile to prove to other people that you are capable of doing certain things just like anyone else. The following are some comments which support this theme:

Nokwazi said:

“...but the people when it came to answering questions I was asked more questions than anyone else who was in the competition with me and then later on when I spoke to the lady who asking questions I asked her why did she ask me so many more questions than everybody else. She was like because if you just win by answering only two questions like everyone else people would have thought I made you win because of your skin colour or because of your looks, so I wanted to prove to them that it was beyond that. So to answer your question yes I do often have to go the extra mile than this ((referring to her skin colour)) doesn’t get me everything that I have...”

Additionally, Rose reported that:

“...that is the case people do expect you to know more because you are light-skinned but sometimes being light-skinned is perceived as beauty so people think that you are an A-head and all you are is just a pretty face...”

Kwanda added:

“...firstly, I don’t know how they associate this but it’s like they expect you to be, I don’t have words, like be clever and secondly, they expect you to be egoistic in a way it’s hard for people to approach you...”

Xoli also said:

“...when you go to such a context you have to prove yourself, you have to literally say I can do this, like give me a chance, but the moment you look light-skinned and you are coming to slaughter maybe a cow he he he people will look at you like naah this person can’t even hold the knife right ((laughs)). So in some contexts you have to prove your masculinity...”

Lisa also supported this and she said:

“...whenever there are things to be done at home especially like ceremony of some sort the whole family is together they won’t expect me and my sisters to be able to do things cause they will be like aaa lo balungu laba which means these white people just because we light-skinned and all the other people will be like no will expect us to know these things and you have to know and whenever I can actually do something and my sisters they are like waal you can or if I show interest in like traditional stuff and ask questions about how to make like the Zulu beer or something it’s called sorghum or whatever they be like haiboo...”

4.4 Summary of findings

The findings highlighted a number of issues that are experienced by the study participants born with a light skin. The participants narrated their experiences and themes were generated. The themes that emerged from the first question were as follows: being light-skinned brings a positive feeling; being light-skinned makes one stand out; there is a feeling of not belonging and name calling in the company of dark-skinned peers. Also, participants stated that there is a social construction in society which states that the fairer the better but the participants do not hold the same sentiment. Other themes were participants claimed that it’s easier to get a marriage partner if you are light-skinned and being light-skinned just as natural as being dark-skinned.

The second question was: What are possible advantages of being born a light-skinned child as perceived by those with such skin colour? To answer this question the following themes were generated: If you are light-skinned society let you off more easily; being light-skinned opens up more opportunities; being light-skinned makes it easier to attract a partner; being light-skinned results in more associates; and being light-skinned gives one a positive outlook.

The third question was: What are the possible disadvantages and challenges associated with being light-skinned? In an endeavour to answer this question the participants' responses were generated into themes as follows: if you are light-skinned you are underestimated; if you are light-skinned you are treated like someone with loose morals; you will be prone to name-calling and bullying; and you will have to prove yourself more than anyone else. These were the findings which emerged from this study. Nonetheless, the next chapter is concerned with the discussion and interpretation of the results outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This phenomenological study explored the experiences of one being born endowed with a light skin tone among the students of UKZN PMB campus. The aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of the experiences of those people who are born light-skinned.

The chapter comprises of a discussion of research findings and the conclusions drawn from these findings, including the recommendations for research and practice. The aim of this concluding chapter is to first, tie together the findings to the objectives of this study. Secondly, it unpacks the essence of the experiences of participants and trying and understand how it feels to be born light-skinned in a society with different skin tones. Thirdly, the study looked at the advantages and disadvantages brought about by being a light-skinned person. The summary of the study was presented followed by the conclusions arising from the study. The chapter also outlined the limitations of the study and made recommendations for further study.

5.2 Discussion of results, research question by research question

The results of this study have been discussed linking them to the objectives of the study. The first objectives was to explore the lived experiences of UKZN students who are born with light skin. The second objective was to examine the understanding of students born with light skin regarding the advantages of being born with lighter skin. The last objective was to ascertain the disadvantages and challenges that are associated with being light-skinned. The results are set down below in line with the research questions investigated, starting with Research Question One as follows:

5.2.1 Research question one:

What are the lived experiences of UKZN students who are born light-skinned? In particular, how does it feel to be born a light-skinned child?

The participants in this study alluded to experiencing something that is different to people who do not possess the same skin tone as theirs. These participants highlighted that being light-

skinned elicits a paradoxical feeling, as it makes them stand out which is a positive angle, but they also feel as if they don't belong as they are often subjected to name calling. At the same time they recognize they have a wider choice in choosing marriage partners; in which case their being light-skinned is a natural positive endowment. In sum, therefore, the key findings of this study are that there are advantages and disadvantages to being light-skinned. These themes are discussed in depth below:

Theme one: Being light-skinned brings a positive feeling Participants of this study concurred with each other that being light-skinned elicits a positive feeling and boosts their self-confidence because many people in the society view them in a positive light. For example, one female participant Lisa (all names mentioned in this discussion are pseudonyms) mentioned that being light-skinned results in a positive outlook and that light-skinned people have less things to worry about. This might be because people are socialised into believing that the lighter one's skin is, the better. These sentiments are supported by Hunter (2002) who said: "If you are light you are alright." More so, another participant Ayanda agreed with Lisa's sentiments when he said that "being light-skinned results in others being more pleasant towards you and people are more likely to accept you because of your skin colour, that is, if you are light-skinned life is easier." From these participants' experiences it is clear that because of their skin colour they are treated positively differently from dark-skinned people. With this one can conclude that being light-skinned elicits a positive outlook.

Theme two: Being light-skinned makes one stand out

In the study participants were asked to recount their experiences as people who live with lighter skin. Almost all of them reported that being light-skinned make them stand out, that is, when they are in the company of a group of people they are easily recognised because of their skin colour. For example Vee, a male participant, said that when he was in primary school he was chosen to be in a sports team even if he was not good at that particular sport. He said he was chosen because he was light-skinned. This is what he said: "Ja growing up being light-skinned kids will always go for light-skinned people like when in a team they are like no you come this side, they don't even know your skills in soccer just because you are light-skinned they want you in the team..." Ayanda also agreed with Vee's sentiments when he said because of his skin colour he gets to be singled out amongst other people who are dark-skinned and Kwanda said that because of his skin colour he gets to be noticed first if he is in the company of dark-skinned people. These sentiments have also been confirmed by South African television personality

Kanyi Mbau, who has undergone skin lightening procedures and she said she believes that the brighter she is, the better and she will stand out and make a lot of money (Dayile, 2018). Therefore, the tendency to stand out from others, and be easily chosen and recognised by others who are not of the same skin tone is one of the experiences of people born with light skin.

Theme three: Feelings of not belonging and name-calling in the company of dark-skinned people

On the other hand, some few participants in this study also said that even though being light-skinned brings about positive outcomes they are also subjected to some negative reactions. They said that because of their skin colour they are often subjected to name-calling and in some cases feel excluded from certain activities. Rose, a female participant, for example, raised the concern that because of her skin colour she is often questioned about whether she belongs to the family or not. This ties up with the researcher's Shona traditions and beliefs that when a Shona child is born, people want to know who the baby looks like, either the mother or the father, and elderly people hold the belief that a child should resemble the father in order to be recognised as part of the clan. If the child does not resemble the father it poses challenges for the mother, who may be suspected of having committed adultery. It also causes problems for the child in that the child might feel unwelcome because people are always questioning if he or she belongs to the family. These very same sentiments were highlighted by some participants in this study, who expressed the feeling that because of their skin colour they do not seem to belong, especially if their siblings and parents are not as light-skinned as them. All the participants concurred with each other that being light-skinned makes them feel they don't belong to the wider society of black people. To support this Lisa said that because she is light-skinned she has been questioned if she has White descendants and she has been labelled not Black enough. This challenge is related to the point made by Keith (2009) who asserts that during the slave trade in America, those Africans who were light-skinned were treated differently to their dark-skinned counterparts, in that they were mostly given nice domestic work and treated much better than the dark-skinned people. This was done because those with light skin were considered to be closer to whiteness and others were the result of a mixing of the races. This can be aligned to the experiences of South African Coloured people, who were treated much better than Black people during Apartheid in South Africa.

Additionally, most of the study participants highlighted that because of their skin colour they are subjected to name calling and given derogatory names. These names include 'Cheesy-boy',

‘slut’, ‘umnyamane’, ‘yellow-bone’ and ‘umbovane.’ The researcher conducted an extensive search of the literature to support this finding about name calling but could not find anything in the existing literature to support it. However, from the researcher’s own understanding, the reason for this might be because those who use these mean and derogatory names are actually jealous or wish they had the same skin tone as those born light skinned; in other words, their name-calling appeared to be instigated by envy against the light-skinned and their wish to be light-skinned as well.

Indeed, this particular finding that light-skinned people are subjected to name calling contrasts with the theory of colorism, which asserts that light skin is better and those endowed with it receive more privileges than those with dark skin (Hunter, 2005). Therefore, if colorism is a theory to go by, these participants wouldn’t be facing name calling at any particular time in their lives but in actual fact that’s their reality and they experience it in some form or another.

Theme four: The fairer the better- a social construction

More so, from the information gathered from the participants it is plainly evident that society has constructed a notion that when you are light-skinned you are beautiful. Many participants assert that it is not them that appraise themselves but society around them; according to participants society considers you to be better than others if you are light-skinned. Most participants in this study echoed the sentiments that they do not realise how light they are until someone mentions it to them and because they are light-skinned people perceive them to be more beautiful than others. Rose, one of the female participants, said that there is a perception that being light-skinned is equivalent to beauty, so automatically there is an assumption that you are beautiful because you are light-skinned. In other words, people have been socialised to regard light-skinned people to be beautiful. In support of this notion Martha, a female participant, when asked if she has been treated differently from her dark-skinned siblings said she has not, but other people think she is beautiful because she is light-skinned. According to the participants, the notion of beauty is brought about by one’s complexion. These findings are supported by Lewis et al. (2011) who argued that colonialism is behind this viewpoint because it left the African region vulnerable to Western influences through the images that portray light-skinned individuals as beautiful and preferable. In addition, Wilder and Cain (2011) state that Black families play a pivotal role in socialising their children to be aware of their colour, such that the family too upholds the skin colour hierarchy, that is to say, those who are light-skinned occupy the top positions in society. According to these authors Western people instilled the

idea that being light-skinned is better than being dark-skinned and that one should strive for it in order to be beautiful. As a result some people have engaged in skin bleaching practices (Keakile, 2016) because they have been conditioned by the society to believe that they have to be light-skinned in order to be considered beautiful and be eligible for some privileges (Lewis et al. (2011). For example, getting a good education, acquiring a good job, attracting a marriage partner, and attaining high status in society. Therefore, the question to be asked is: Can those who engage in skin bleaching practices be justified in doing so? And the most likely answer is: Probably yes because they seek to fit into a society where being light-skinned is the epitome of beauty.

Theme five: Marriage partner preference

Furthermore, the social advantage theory (Nwoye, 2017) proposes that people born with light skin in the context of mate selection or friendship selection will have first preference compared to those who are dark-skinned. In this way, being born light-skinned confers an advantage in getting a marriage partner. When there is mate selection competition, those who are born with yellow skin have an advantage over those born with dark skin (Nwoye, 2017 unpublished lecture notes). This theory connotes that it is easier for light-skinned people to find a marriage partner and that light-skinned people are more sought after compared to their dark-skinned counterparts. However, from the data gathered from the female participants in this study, this is the opposite in their experience because they say that in their search for a marriage partner skin colour is not a major consideration at all. As a matter of fact, all the female participants said they prefer dark-skinned male counterparts for a marriage partner. All the female participants agreed with each other that they prefer dark-skinned men for marriage partners because they are physically attractive, appear to be strong rather than weak, and tend to be protective and hardworking. More so, some male participants also agreed with their female counterparts that they do not find light-skinned females attractive when it comes to marriage partners, and they prefer the dark-skinned. They state that the reason for their preference as being that light-skinned females love attention, and that's not an appealing trait to them. However, one male participant did not ascribe to the afore-mentioned notion and said that he will never date or marry a dark-skinned person and his reason was that light-skinned females are more attractive and beautiful. Therefore, finding a marriage partner might not be an issue of skin colour but other traits, like kindness, selflessness, loving and caring. The trend in this study thus reveals that there is a division of opinion among the participants as regards whether being light-skinned is preferred in marriage than being dark-skinned.

Theme 6: Being light-skinned is natural and not different from other complexions

When some participants were asked how being light-skinned makes them feel, they highlighted the fact that they take being light-skinned as normal, as with any other skin tone. They highlighted that their experience is the same as those who are dark-skinned. The sentiments elicited from the participants are that to them being light-skinned is nothing special; it is society or those who are not light-skinned that portray them in a different light and consider them beautiful. This theme goes hand in hand with theme four explored in this study which highlighted the fact that viewing light-skinned people as beautiful is a social construction. Participants have shared the sentiments that they do not receive any special treatment because of their skin colour. From an extensive search conducted of the available literature, the researcher found that no literature supports this theme; all the literature reviewed asserts that being light-skinned is different from being dark-skinned and those who are endowed with it enjoy certain privileges (Robinson, 2011; Hunter, 2011; AlGhamdi, 2010; Gwaravanda, 2011; Lewis et al., 2011).

5.2.2 Research question two:

What are the possible advantages of being born light-skinned as perceived by those born with such a skin colour?

. Under this research question the participants in this study narrated their experiences about being light-skinned by talking about the advantages of being light-skinned. A number of themes came out of this research question and these will be discussed below.

Theme one: Society tends to let you off very easily

The first theme that emerged from the study in regard to this is that participants purported that society tends to make more allowances for them because they are light-skinned and they get away with more mistakes. According to the participants, the community has a soft spot for those who are light-skinned compared to those who are dark-skinned. When talking about this theme Lisa talked about how one day she was wearing dirty tekkies and people found it attractive because she was light-skinned, but maybe people would have reacted differently if she were a dark-skinned person. In support of this theme another participant, Martha, agreed with Lisa's sentiments when she mentioned that being light-skinned affords one favours from people, especially men, because they are enticed by light-skinned people. This is consistent with what Hunter (2002), and Mpengesi and Nzuza (2014) stated when they argued that having

a lighter skin tone is accorded high regard, while those whose are dark-skinned are made to feel unworthy and valueless. Therefore, having light skin makes people regard you highly, and this boosts your self-esteem. Considered against the above, this study reveals that it is advantageous to be light-skinned. Therefore, can those who engage in skin bleaching be justified because of this favour which is afforded those who are light? Following some of the positive trends with regard to the phenomenon of being light-skinned, it can be said that it is actually a challenge to rebuke those who engage in skin bleaching because of the advantages that light skin accords people, but one would need to weigh the consequences, both positive and negative, to decide if it's worth it.

Theme two: Being light-skinned gets you opportunities

When asked if there are any advantages to being light-skinned, University of KwaZulu-Natal students revealed that being light-skinned favours them with more opportunities. These opportunities include getting jobs, favours, having more friends, among other things. Participants highlighted that jobs that look at one's skin colour, for example, waitressing, marketing and promotions, modelling and television jobs, tend to favour those with light skin colour. This theme is highly endorsed by the theory of colorism, which rests on the premise that light-skinned people enjoy considerable privileges that are mostly unobtainable by those who are dark-skinned (Hunter, 2007). In support of the above argument, Hunter (2002) argued that light skin works as a social capital, especially for women, because those who possess it are regarded as beautiful and beauty is regarded as social capital (Hunter, 2002). Therefore, those who are light-skinned are believed to turn that social capital into economic capital by getting jobs and earning a lot of money and educational capital. In addition, a study conducted in Tanzania by Lewis et al. (2011) discovered that people who skin bleach often succumb to pressure from their peers who are light-skinned because they enjoy more benefits, like high status, more income, educational opportunities and good jobs. The participants in this study agreed with all these sentiments stating that light-skinned people enjoy a lot of opportunities.

Theme three: Being light-skinned makes it easy to get a partner

In addition, in African communities marriage is regarded as one of the passage rites and when choosing a marriage partner one has to take numerous things into consideration. Some of the things that people look at when they choose a partner, include wealth, maturity, religion, appearance and skin tone. In this study participants reported that if you are light-skinned it's easier to find a marriage partner. In support of the aforementioned point Blue, a male

participant, said if you are light-skinned you get to pick and choose, ladies just flock to you so for a light-skinned person it's easy to get a partner. More so, Ayanda agreed with Blue and he said if you try your luck and ask a girl for her number you should get it quite easily, unlike a dark-skinned person. In other words, what these participants are saying is that if you are light-skinned, you will not struggle to get a marriage partner, unlike if you are dark-skinned. This point satisfies the claims made by Nwoye (2017) in his social advantage theory which states that people who are born with light skin in the context of mate selection or friendship selection will have first preference compared to those who are dark-skinned. In this way being born light-skinned appears to confer advantages in finding a marriage partner. In addition, a study that was done by Lewis et al. (2011) found out that people skin bleach in an endeavour to satisfy their partners and also to attract and increase their chances to get sexual partners (Lewis et al., 2011). In support of this assertion, Charles (2011) argued that the reason why people in Jamaica skin bleach is because fair skin brings about high status and sexual attractiveness. There is a belief that when you are light-skinned you get a marriage partner and the participants of this study confirmed it. Therefore, one can conclude that there are some advantages to being light-skinned. However, this study has equally revealed that this assumption is not completely supported by some of the participants.

Theme four: Being light-skinned gets you more associates

Yet some participants in this study reported that being light-skinned means one has more associates and friends. In other words, people who are not so light-skinned enjoy the company of a light-skinned person because it attracts attention from onlookers. Mbali, one of the participants, said if you are light-skinned you will have more friends and people enjoy being seen with you because they think a fairer person is better. She said she mostly experiences it with males. Vee also supported Mbali's claims when he said when he was growing up, other kids would always go for light-skinned people like him, for example, when choosing members for a team they would always choose him for their team regardless of his skills, but only because he was light-skinned. All these cases confirm that being light-skinned makes one have more friends and this trend is corroborated by a study conducted by Lewis et al. (2011) when they asked their participants what motivated them to skin bleach. One of the reasons they mentioned was that they wanted to have more friends. Therefore, the assumption in this study was that if you are light-skinned you will have more friends, which assumption was confirmed to be true by participants in this study.

Theme five: Being light-skinned gives a positive outlook

, From the majority of the participants' point of view being light-skinned results in a positive outlook, in other words, it boosts one's self-esteem and self-confidence. The lack of self-esteem and self-confidence from those who are not light-skinned can be attributed to colonialism since Europeans maintained White supremacy by establishing a racial hierarchy in which Black people were made to be subservient to White people (Blay, 2011). Also, during the time of colonialism, Blacks were portrayed as backward and unattractive while Whites were regarded as virtuous, beautiful and loveable (Blay, 2011). In support of this theme, Lisa said there has been always an underlying or subconscious pleasant feeling about being light-skinned because of the teaching, "the lighter the better". What is evident from Lisa's sentiments is that society has constructed light skin to be the skin tone of choice and that light skin equates to beauty, hence, because of those instilled ideologies some people with light skin tend to regard themselves highly over those who are dark in complexion. The theory of self-esteem (Nwoye, 2017 unpublished lecture notes) suggests that people who are light-skinned tend to have positive self-esteem in relation to their counterparts who are born with dark skin. They seem to have a colour they are proud of in the context where being born with fair skin is preferred over being born with dark skin (Nwoye, 2017 unpublished lecture notes). Therefore, from all the themes that have been discussed above, one can conclude by saying that being light-skinned brings about some advantages. However, regardless of all these advantages that light-skinned people enjoy, there are also some disadvantages which some participants have highlighted; and those will be discussed in detail below.

5.2.3 Research question three:

What are the possible disadvantages and challenges associated with being light-skinned?

Participants in this study concurred that they have numerous things that they enjoy about being light-skinned, for example, better job opportunities, having many associates and friends, easier to find marriage partners, society makes more allowances for them, and being light-skinned gives them a positive outlook. However, there are also not-so-good aspects about being light-skinned as reported by some of the participants; and I have termed them disadvantages of being light-skinned and the participants highlighted that they have experienced these negatives at one or more instances in their lives. These disadvantages include 'being underestimated,' 'being treated like someone with loose morals', 'being prone to name calling', 'being sexually

harassed' and they are forced always to prove themselves more than other people who are not as light in complexion as them. These themes are discussed in detail below.

Theme one: If you are light-skinned you are underestimated

The first disadvantage to being light-skinned, according to participants, is that they are underestimated in that with each achievement you have to convince people that it was through your hard work you made it and not through favours from people because you are light-skinned. In support of this point of disadvantage, Lisa one of the participants said that "if you are light-skinned they don't think you can work as hard as they can because most of the time I don't know I think it goes back to the thing that lighter people stay in the house and they do less work than the people that go outside. So I think somewhere there is that but you really underestimate that as a light-skinned like even your accomplishments it's hardly ever the case that people think you got it because you can; you know. They probably think that you have a connection of some sort, you flashed your smile or your light-skinned boob ((laughs)) somewhere and you got that job or you got that car." However, according to some of the study participants this assumption is false in that they work as hard as dark-skinned people and they do not get any favours on a silver platter. The researcher did not find any literature or theory to support this notion since most literature talks about the privileges that are accorded to light-skinned people. This apparent contradiction is therefore a new trend revealed in this study.

Theme two: Being treated like someone with loose morals

The second disadvantage that people who are light-skinned was reported to be facing is the view that people tended to treat them as people with loose morals; a view that was mostly highlighted by female participants. From the data gathered it was evident that the notion of being labelled as someone with loose morals emanates from people who skin bleach to become light-skinned and are termed 'yellowbones' (a slang that means light-skinned) and most of these people are into what is termed 'Blessers', a new term for sugar daddies or sugar mummies. Therefore, people in society automatically label anyone that is light-skinned as a person of loose morals because of what skin bleachers do. In support of this Rose, one of the participants, said that there is a stigma as well that 'yellow bones' are into 'Blessers', yellow bones like money, 'yellow bones' are loose and manipulate men, that all yellow bones are loose. This misconception results in people born with light skin being labelled immoral and this goes hand in hand with the other disadvantage that the research uncovered, which is that people who are light-skinned are prone to name calling and sexual harassment.

Theme three: Prone to name calling and sexual harassment

Some of the abusive names that light-skinned people were reported to be called include: ‘slut’, ‘cheesy boy’, ‘*umlungu*’ (white person), ‘bo yellow’ (light-skinned person) and ‘*umbovane*’ (extremely light-skinned). The reason why the participants, under the theme of disadvantages experienced by them, listed these names is that they are derogatory labels that connote undermining of others. Similar to the above, female participants highlighted that apparently because of their skin colour they are often sexually harassed, an ordeal associated with the belief that society regards light-skinned people as people with loose morals. This is in contradiction with what the literature and the theories used in this study have found, for example, the self-esteem theory which suggests that people who are light-skinned tend to have positive self-esteem in relation to their counterparts who are born with dark skin. They seem to have a colour they are proud of in the context where being born with fair skin is preferred over being with dark skin (Nwoye, 2017 unpublished lecture notes). This theory suggests that having a light skin boosts one’s self-esteem and self-confidence. However, by their being labelled as people with loose morals, prone to name calling and sexual harassment means that the assumption propagated in the literature that light skinned people are those whose skin colour boosts their self-esteem and confidence has not been confirmed in this study. Rather the opposite is the case: some of them gets demoralised by the light colour of their skin. From the literature and theories used only good things about being light-skinned are highlighted, not the bad things. Therefore, from the results of this study it is clear that not all is smooth sailing for light-skinned people. This negative finding does pose some challenges to those who skin bleach in that if they yearn to be light-skinned and engage in bleaching, they are likely to be disappointed by what is waiting for them if as revealed in this study is not well for those with are light skinned.

Theme four: Proving yourself more than anyone else

Lastly, another disadvantage that this study unearthed is that light-skinned people have to prove themselves more than anyone else and this disadvantage ties in with the first disadvantage, which states that light-skinned people are often underestimated as they are considered to be weak or delicate in strength. The participants in this study concurred with each other that, in whatever you do you have to convince people that you have done it yourself without receiving any favours from someone. One participant reported that it is mostly when they have to do cultural chores like brewing beer, slaughtering a cow or milking a cow, that most people in the

African society seem to think that if you are light-skinned you are incapable of performing those cultural duties, hence they (people with light skin) have to prove to others that they are indeed capable of carrying out those chores.

5.3 Summary of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences, stories and understanding of some select University of KwaZulu-Natal students who were born light-skinned (normally referred to as yellow bones). The study sought to ascertain what advantages or disadvantages and challenges are associated with being born a yellow bone in a context where many people are yearning to be like them.

The study made use of a qualitative approach and according to Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006) qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live in. A purposive sample of 12 participants from UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus black student community took part in the study regardless of their level of study. The rationale behind using purposive sampling was that the UKZN student community is composed of those who are born with light skin and those who are not and since the study focuses on the light-skinned people, a purposive sample was considered fitting to yield the relevant data for the study. To recruit participants for the study the researcher used a Raid technique (Nwoye, 2016), which means that the researcher visited targeted viable sites where potential participants were located, approached them respectfully and asked if they were interested in participating in the study. Those who agreed were invited to participate in in-depth interviews, which interviews were transcribed, coded and put into themes. The data gathered was analysed using the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This technique involves a detailed examination of the participants' personal experiences and perceptions concerning the issue under study (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

The study was guided by three theoretical frameworks, namely the theory of colorism, the social advantage theory and the self-esteem theory. These theories highlighted some of the perceived advantages and privileges that people who have been born with light skin enjoy. They also accounted for the motivation of skin bleaching by dark-skinned people who bleach their skin after perceiving that there are advantages to being light-skinned.

The results of the study showed that people who are born light-skinned have specific experiences that they were ready to share with the researcher. For instance, participants

highlighted that being light-skinned brings about some positive sentiments like getting opportunities, having more acquaintances, finding marriage partners more easily and obtaining favours from society. They also felt that the notion of the lighter the better is socially constructed by their societies as for them light skin does not confer beauty. The study also revealed being light-skinned comes with its own challenges, which challenges include being called names, being undermined and having to prove themselves, being sexually harassed and being bullied.

5.4 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions can be made regarding the experience of being born with light skin among the UKZN students of PMB campus:

- There are some positive experiences enjoyed by people born with a yellow bone. These include having a positive feeling, standing out, having a wider choice when choosing a marriage partner.
- There are some advantages to being light-skinned. These advantages include having the society letting you off easily, getting more associates and having a positive outlook.
- Being born light-skinned is not all rosy for those involved; they are often faced with some disadvantages. These disadvantages include being underestimated, being treated as people with loose morals, being prone to name-calling and sexual harassment, and having to prove oneself more than everyone else.

5.5 Implications and Recommendations

The above findings have some serious implications for people who engage in the dangerous or health risky habit of skin bleaching. This is because from the findings of this study it appears obvious that all is not well with people endowed with light skin. Hence, people who indulge in skin bleaching in order to gain the social and economic capitals that go with it, must be ready to suffer the accompanying backlash which this study has revealed is associated with it. There is, therefore, the need to alert people by means of appropriate public education that being light-skinned attracts both positive and negative advantages and that the hitherto one-side positive image that people have about the effects of being light-skinned must be approached with some caution.

5.6 Limitations of the study

Some of the limitations of the present study are highlighted below.

Firstly, the study was conducted in English and it was difficult for participants to narrate their experiences since English was not their first language. Many times participants gave one word answers because they could not express themselves well in English.

Secondly, the sample was not generalisable to the entire UKZN population because the study was carried out on one campus and the university comprises of five campuses. Also, the study only included one race because an assumption was made that Black people are born with skin variations. However, this assumption is not true because skin variations also exist in the Indian and Coloured communities.

Thirdly, it was difficult to recruit participants for the study, especially males, as they often failed to arrive for their interview despite having confirmed their availability with the researcher.

Lastly, another challenge the researcher faced when conducting the research is that participants were not willing to talk about their experiences and some said their experiences are no different from those people who are dark-skinned.

5.7 Recommendations for further research

Based on the above, the following recommendations for improved further research on this theme are made:

Firstly, for future research the interviews should be conducted in the language that the participants are comfortable with as this will allow the participants to express themselves with ease and will help the researchers to obtain richer data.

Secondly, to improve the generalizability of study findings, future should be conducted using a wide variety of participants. Also, such future study can be designed to include other races, like Indians and Coloureds, because whilst conducting this study the researcher became aware that these races also have skin colour disparities – there are those who are fairer than others and darker than others.

Thirdly, concerning recruitment challenges, especially of males, the researcher recommends that future studies should not be restrictive. For this study the researcher had to recruit a certain number of males and females. For example, future researchers could strive to recruit any

number of males and females without being concerned about satisfying the requirement of an equal number of participants in each gender category.

Lastly, since some participants highlighted that their experience is no different from people who are not light-skinned, the researcher recommends that future research be done interviewing those who are dark-skinned asking them what they think are the experiences, privileges and favours that light-skinned people enjoy but which they themselves do not. This will help to set up a useful comparison between the views of the two groups on the matter

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Information Sheet

A STUDY OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE BORN WITH *YELLOW BONES*

Thank you for contributing your time to help us with this important study.

What are we doing?

My name is Tsitsi Chirove. I am a first year Master's student specializing in Research Psychology. I am doing a study about the experiences of University of KwaZulu-Natal students who are born with light skin. The results of this study could provide important information on why people engage in skin bleaching practices.

Participation is confidential and voluntary

ALL of your responses will be completely confidential and anonymous. You will NOT be asked for your name, and answers to these questions will never be associated with you in any way. PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ANYWHERE.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and you are not obliged to participate. There are no monetary benefits attached to participating in this study. You may decide not to answer certain questions at any time. But, you will be more helpful by answering every question that you can. Participation in the study is unlikely to involve any risks or discomfort, however, should you incur any psychological discomfort as a result of participating in this study, referral mechanisms will be put in place to provide the necessary support (e.g. Student Counselling Center Reception: Mike Murray 0332605233 Psychologists: Mariam Jassat Email: jassat@ukzn.ac.za OR Tracey Visser Email: visser@ukzn.ac.za). Furthermore, if you are interested in finding out the results of the study, you can contact either me or my supervisor on the contacts below, and a verbal or a written feedback report will be provided to you. In addition, a copy of the thesis will be made available in the university library at the end of the research which you can access.

In addition, if you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a study participant, or if you are concerned about an aspect of the study or the researcher then you may contact the relevant authorities (e.g. Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Administration: Ms. Ximba -Tel: 031 260 3587 OR HssrecHumanities@ukzn.ac.za). This will be ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Research Ethics Committee. Gate keeper permission to conduct research on university premises has been granted by from university registrar.

You must be 18 years old or older to participate in this study.

More information about the study

You can contact me: phone 0717099851 or via email: chirovets@gmail.com

OR my research supervisor nwoye@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix 2: Consent Form for Interviews

Please sign and return the following if you choose to take part in this study:

- I confirm that I have read and thoroughly understand the information sheet provided to me regarding the topic on experiences of *yellow bones*.
- I know that my participation is completely voluntary and I may withdraw from participation at any time without any penalties.
- I know that the researcher will treat the information given with the utmost confidentiality.
- I also understand that I may call the researcher at any time if I have questions.
- I know that referral support services will be provided to me if need arises.
- I know that I can contact the relevant research ethics office if I have any concerns or questions regarding my rights as a research participant
- I understand that feedback will be provided to me upon my request and a copy of the thesis will also be available at the university library.

CONSENT:

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to being a research participant for a study on skin bleaching practices.

Signature

Date

Appendix 3: Audio Consent

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record interviews

YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix 4: Interview Schedule

Interviewer question guide

1. Tell me about yourself, family and siblings
2. Are any of your siblings light-skinned?
3. Are your parents light –skinned?
4. How does it feel to be born fair?
5. Are there any advantages or perhaps disadvantages of having fair skin?
6. Would you date or marry someone who is light skinned or dark-skinned?
7. How does society treat you in terms of your skin colour- does it treat you different from those with dark skin?
8. What skin colour do you prefer for your children?
9. What are your experiences so far regarding your skin colour?
10. If you were given a chance to change your skin colour would you do so and why

Appendix 5: Ethical Clearance Approval Letter



5 September 2017

Mrs Tsitsi Chirova 213556379
School of Applied Human Sciences – Psychology
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mrs Chirova

Protocol reference number: HSS/0806/017M

Project Title: *The experience of being born a yellow-bone : A phenomenological study of University of KwaZulu-Natal Students. Students*

Full Approval – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

In response to your application received 20 June 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Prof Augustine Nwoye
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Mary van der Riet
cc School Administrator: Ms Nondumiso Khanyile

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X24001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 266 2587/03534567 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 232 4630 Email: singhu@ukzn.ac.za / cc.human@ukzn.ac.za / cc.shenuka@ukzn.ac.za

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Appendix 6: Gate Keeper Approval Letter



16 May 2017

Tsitsi Chirove (SN 213556379)
School of Applied Human Sciences
College of Humanities
Pietermaritzburg Campus
UKZN
Email: chirovets@gmail.com nwoyc@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Tsitsi:

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"The experience of being born a yellow-bone: A phenomenological study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal students".

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with students on the Pietermaritzburg campus.

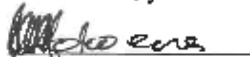
Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book.

Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely


MR SS MOKOENA
REGISTRAR

Office of the Registrar
Postal Address: Private Bag X64001, Durban South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2208 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za
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